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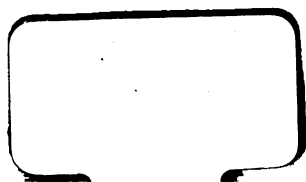
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GRANDMA



AND HER  
GRANDCHILDREN













GRANDMA  
AND HER  
GRANDCHILDREN.

BY THE AUTHOR OF  
"THREE STREET ORPHANS," "THE CLOUDS," "HOPE: ITS LIGHTS  
AND SHADOWS," ETC.



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# GRANDMA AND HER GRANDCHILDREN.



## CHAPTER I.

### ELLA VISITS HER GRANDMA.

**W**HAT a flutter of joy little Ella was in that morning she was taken away to see her grandma for the first time, and to be left with her for a few weeks! It was her first outing into the great world, and a very great world it seemed to her. There was no end of her wonderings and questionings by the way. It was rather late when the end of the journey was reached, and as grandma was in bed, and Ella much worn out, it was thought best that she should not see her till next

morning. The morning came, and Ella in her best dress was taken up to her grandma's chamber.

"Are you grandma?" she cried, as she ran forward to the bedside.

"Yes, darling. Shall I have a kiss from you?"

"O yes, but I can't get up."

She was lifted into the bed, and kneeling upon her knees, she looked down into her grandma's face.

"Are you afraid to kiss me, Ella?"

"No, but you are not so pretty as mamma."

"Not now, dear, but once I was."

"Pretty as mamma?"

"Yes, darling, so people say."

"Who are the people?"

"Anybody and everybody."

Ella was bewildered, and kept looking into her grandma's face.

"I see I am not to have a kiss."

"O yes, grandma; but isn't it so—so—"

"Strange, you mean."

"Yes, grandma," and she knelt down and kissed the old lady two or three times.

"What soft lips you have, grandma!"

"Are they too soft?"

"No, indeed; they are like my silk velvet cape, and papa's lips are so rough and sore, and he does kiss me so when he comes in, and mamma scolds him and calls him naughty. But what pretty hair you've got, grandma!"

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, it is so white—as white as anything," and she stroked it as she spoke, and thrust her little chubby fingers in amongst it.

"Would you like to have white hair, Ella?"

"O yes, grandma—can you make it white?—it is so pretty, just like my birthday dress. Can you, grandma?"

"No, dear."

"If I were putting snow on it would it not grow white?"

"No; the snow would just melt and leave it as black as ever."

"What shall I do, then?"

"You must wait till you grow old."

"And had you to wait, grandma?"

"Yes, when I was young like you, my hair was blacker than yours."

"O grandma! were you once young?"

"Yes, dear."

"And did you get your hair curled, and were you ever naughty?"

"Yes, both."

"And had you a mamma?"

"Yes."

"And did she ever scold you, and say you were naughty?"

"Yes."

Ella clapped her hands and laughed and laughed, and the old lady laughed along with her.

"It is so funny, grandma."

"I daresay it is, child."

"And did you ever scold mamma, and tell her to go to bed?"

"Yes, but not often—she was a good child."

"Scold mamma!—it is so funny, isn't it,

grandma ? ” and she laughed again till the tears came into her eyes.”

“ Well, yes !—but wait till you are as old as I am, and then you won’t think it so funny.”

“ And are you very old, grandma ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ As old as old Towser ? ”

“ Is that your house-dog ? ”

“ Yes, Towser, you know—my Towser, that fought the bad dog that was going to bite me.”

“ I am a great deal older than Towser—I am more than eighty years of age, Ella.”

“ Eighty years ! how old is that ? ”

“ How old are you ? ”

“ I am five my next birthday.”

“ Well, I am nearly twenty times older than you.”

“ Twenty times ! ” and Ella opened her eyes as wide as they would go, and drew in a very long, wondering breath.

“ Yes, Ella, twenty times ! How many fingers have you ? ”

"I have four fingers and a thumb, grandma."

"Well, count them over twenty times."

Ella began to count, but when she had reached nine times she stopped and said,

"Grandma, I am tired ; I shall never get to the end."

"O yes, if you go on you'll get to the end. Go on, it is a good thing to finish what we begin. Some people begin and don't finish. These are lazy people, and you would not like to be called lazy, would you ?"

Ella started again, and by a great effort reached twenty.

"Grandma, I am awfully tired. You must be awfully tired to be twenty times older than me."

"But if you live as long as I have done, Ella, you will be as old as I am."

"As old as you, grandma ?"

"Yes, dear! When I was young like you I thought eighty years would never come to an end. They seemed like a little eternity to me, and eternity is a time that

never comes to an end. But you see my eighty years have come to an end, and on looking back, they don't seem long at all and always as I grow older the years seem to get shorter. You were once younger yourself than you now are, Ella—weren't you?"

"O yes, grandma. I was once a little girl like baby Jane, and I could hardly walk or speak, and they called me baby then; but that is long ago."

"Is it very long ago?"

"Yes, grandma, a long, long time ago—when I was little, you know."

"Would you not like to be baby again?"

"O no, grandma; you know that would never do. I have little Jane to nurse and dress and teach, and tell her everything; and she would never do without me; and I sometimes lend her my dolls to play with when she is good. Did you have dolls, grandma, when you were young?"

"A great number, dear; and I was very fond of them, and often took them with me to bed, and dreamt about them, and they

often spoke to me in my dreams, and sometimes they were naughty, and I had to scold and to correct them."

"And did they cry, grandma?"

"Sometimes, and then I was sorry and petted them, and then we were friends again."

"O grandma, I do that, too; it is so funny, isn't it? and I have brought a great boxful with me — the 'Babes in the Wood,' you know, and 'The Robin,' and 'Noah's Ark,' and 'The Walls of Troy,' and 'The House that Jack Built,' and I'll give you some of them into your bed, and it'll be so nice. I'll give you the mewling cat and the barking dog."

"Thank you; one of them will be quite enough."

"No, grandma, the cat and the dog always go together, you know; and they will make such fun."

"No doubt, dear, but you know I cannot enjoy these things so much as I once did. There is a good man in the Bible who says, 'When I was a child I spake as a child, I

understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.' "

" But, grandma, dolls are not childish things ; they are for grown-up girls like myself."

" Yes, yes, dear ; I don't mean that you should not like them. It is quite right you should, and I hope you will enjoy them very much while you are here ; for, as another wise man in the Bible says, ' There is a time for everything.' There is bed time, you know, and rising time, and summer time and winter time, and a time to get teeth and a time to lose them."

" And had you once teeth, grandma ? "

" Yes, a great mouthful."

" And what did you do with them ? Did the doctor take them all away ? "

" No, dear ; they fell out as I grew old."

" What a pity, grandma ! Can you eat any ? "

" O yes, in a way."

" But, grandma, what cut your face all over ? "

"These are wrinkles, dear."

"And where did you get them?"

"Time brought them."

"Is time a doctor?"

"No, it is old age."

"I shan't grow old."

"Then you must die young."

"No, grandma, I won't die."

"Then you must grow old."

"And have all these cuts on my face?"

"Yes, and lose your teeth."

"My teeth, too?"

"And grow stiff like me; but then you will have pretty white hair."

"Grandma! I'm going to cry."

"You need not cry, child, about that. Don't you know that I shall grow young again, and be prettier than ever I was—pretty as an angel?"

"When, grandma?"

"After I die. There is One coming from heaven who will make all the dead live again; and those that loved Him, He will make their bodies as bright as the sun, and He will give them wings and they will

fly away up with Him into heaven, and they will never grow old, and will never die again, but be young and beautiful and happy for ever and ever."

"Grandma!—how nice that will be!"

"Yes, indeed. Would you like to go there?"

"Wouldn't I?—but isn't it Jesus you mean that mamma speaks about?"

"Yes, dear; and He is very fond of children—good children who think about Him, and speak about Him, and love Him."

"I love Him very much, grandma—He is so good. Mamma says He died for us, to take us to heaven."

"Yes, child, and heaven is far better than living here—they are all so beautiful and loving and happy yonder, and they never get tired, or sleepy, or hungry, or weary, or sick; and there is no night there, and no one is vexed, and no one weeps, for they are all so happy, happy, and always happy. You see then, darling, it does not matter though we get old and wrinkled and die, when we are so soon to be young again,

and far more beautiful, and happier, than ever we can be here."

"Yes, grandma, but you're not going to die yet."

"I may live a little while, but it can't be long."

"O grandma, I'm going to cry!"

"No, child—why should you cry? You see I don't cry. I am glad I have to die, because I know I must die before I get to heaven; and much as I love your papa and mamma, and you and the rest, I love Jesus far more, and I know it is far better to be with Him than staying here."

"Shall we not see you, grandma, after you go to heaven?"

"No, dear—not until you come up."

"But, grandma, how will I get up?—I can't fly."

"No, dear, but the birds can fly, and God gave the birds wings, and He can give you wings, for He can do everything; and He has promised to take those who love Jesus up to heaven when they die, and God never breaks His word."

You see, then, that to die is really to live."

"And will I get taking my dolls up with me, grandma?"

"No, dear—you would not care about dolls there."

"I think, grandma, I'll not go."

"But you'll get plenty of dolls yonder—far, far prettier than those you have—and you'll get them all for nothing; and though you took up your dolls, you would fling them all away when you saw the beautiful things you will get in heaven."

"Well, grandma, I think I'll go; and I'll take my birth-day dress with me, and my velvet cape and my silk cap."

"You'll not need, Ella dear, to take any dresses with you, for you'll get plenty in heaven; and of all the dresses you have ever seen, you never saw any half so beautiful."

"As beautiful as mamma's lace gown with the pretty beads?"

"Ten times more beautiful! You've seen the stars. Well, they are brighter

than the stars, and whiter than the moon, and prettier than the roses !”

“ O grandma, but wont they all be given away before we get there ? ”

“ No, dear ; there are thousands and millions of them, and they will never be all done, and Jesus gives them to everyone that comes ; and He is so glad when a great number comes.”

“ O grandma, how rich He must be, to buy them all ! ”

“ Yes, He is very rich—so rich that He cannot count His riches ; and though He were to give one of these rich dresses to all the people in the world, He would not feel that He was the least poorer for it.”

“ And, grandma, who does He get to sew them ? ”

“ They don’t need to be sewed, dear—they are all without a seam ; and they are so perfectly pure and white, they never need to be washed.”

“ Never washed, grandma ? ”

“ Do the stars need to be washed ? ”

“ I suppose not, grandma.”

"The stars may get dirty, but Christ's beautiful dresses never get soiled, for there is no dust in heaven, nor anything that defiles. And then the music, Ella. You like music—don't you? Very well. The music yonder is sweeter—a thousand times sweeter—than the sweetest music you ever heard!—and everyone there gets a golden harp, and everyone sings and plays, and rejoices with a great joy."

"I can sing, grandma, but I can't play."

"But you'll learn to play there in the least time possible, for the angels will teach you. And now, Ella dear, we've had a long talk, and you may go into the fields and amuse yourself; and I have to tell you that no less than four of your cousins are to be here by-and-by, and you will all take tea with me in the evening."

"O grandma, that will be so nice—we shall have such fun."

"I hope so; now kiss me and go."



## CHAPTER II.

### ENTERTAINING THE CHILDREN.

**E**VENING came, and Ella and her cousins took tea with grandma. There was Richard, eleven years old ; and Euphy, his sister, fully nine ; with their cousins, Henry and John—the one twelve years old, and the other seven. After tea, and playing some games, grandma said—

“ Now, children, wont it be pleasant to have a little variety ? What think you we shall try ? ”

“ We might try,” said John, “ who shall stand longest on one leg.”

“ No,” said Richard, “ let us see which of us can leap over this couch.”

“ I think, children, you might devise something in which I could take part. My leaping days, you know, are over. Might

we not play at something with our minds ? What would you think of leaping over a few questions, and I'll hold the string, and then I might tell you a story ? ”

“ Yes, yes, grandma—that's nice,” they all shouted with great glee.

“ Well, Ella, how many teeth have you ? ”

“ Fifty, grandma,” said Ella at a venture. A loud laugh followed.

“ How many say you, Euphy ? ”

“ Perhaps a dozen, grandma.”

“ And you, Richard—you should know ? ”

“ Well, grandma, I never counted, but surely we have more than a dozen and less than fifty.”

“ Somewhere about thirty, I think,” suggested Henry, as he drew his forefinger from his mouth.

“ I see none of you know any more than Ella, so it is Ella's turn to laugh at you. Is there no way you could find it out ? ”

“ I know,” cried one ; “ So do I,” said another ; “ And I too,” exclaimed a third and a fourth.

“ Well, find it out, and tell me to-morrow

forenoon. I could tell you now ; but can you tell me my reason for not telling you ?”

There was no answer given.

“ Well, my reason is this. We think more of what costs us some labour to get than of that which costs us none ; and secondly, because it is our own ; and thirdly, we keep a better hold of it, and therefore remember it longer ; and best of all, we understand better what we find out for ourselves. You must take my word for this in the meantime, but try it, and you will find it is true ; and if it be true, don’t you think I do you a service in not telling you ? ”

“ Yes, grandma,” they all assented.

“ Well, I shall ask you another question. Is it to be an easy or a difficult one ? ”

“ A difficult one,” said Henry.

“ Very well. How many hairs have you upon your head ? ”

“ That’s an awful puzzler,” cried John.

“ Do you think you could find that out, any of you, by to-morrow forenoon.”

Everyone shook the head and laughed.

"Have you counted the stars, then?"

"No, grandma. Who could do that?" said Euphy.

"Would you like me to tell you of One who has counted them, and given everyone of them a name, and who knows also the exact number of hairs in each of our heads?"

"I know," said Henry.

"So do I," said Richard; "I read it in the Bible. It is God."

"Will you find out the places in the Bible then, and we shall read them over to-morrow forenoon. It appears, then, that God knows things that we don't know. Now, if you are not tired, I shall ask you another question. How many eyes have you?"

"Two," cried Ella.

"How many ears?"

"Two," shouted several voices.

"How many lungs?"

"Three," ventured Euphy.

"Only two," interposed Henry.

"How many hearts?"

"Two," said Ella.

"Just one," said John.

"Well, John, what is the use of your heart?"

John was silent.

"Put your hand there, John, and you will feel it beating; or here, at your wrist, and you will feel something pulse, pulsing; or better still, when you lie down to-night, fold the lobe of your ear thus, and lay it down firm on the pillow, and you will hear your heart working away and away as long as you like to listen. Now, answer me this if you can, any of you. What makes the heart beat? I knew you could not tell me, and I cannot tell you, and I suppose nobody can tell you. But I know One who knows, for He knows everything."

"It is He who counts the stars," said Euphy.

"Right, my dear. Can any of you tell me now if your heart beats when you are asleep?"

"It does," said Richard.

"How do you know?"

"Because," said Richard, "because—"

"Because," interposed Henry, "if it stopped we should die."

"Do you tell it to beat on, Henry, before you fall asleep, and to keep on till you awake?"

"No, grandma, it does not need to be told. It just goes on like the clock all night."

"And what is it, Richard, makes the clock go on? You are not sure. Well, I may tell you that most clocks require to be wound up every week—that is, the weight that makes them go requires to be wound up, and if it is not wound up the clock dies, that is, it ceases to move and tell the moments and the hours. Does your heart, Euphy, require to be wound up every week. You may laugh, children, but something is needed to keep it going, and if that something were taken away, it would stop, and you would die. How long, Richard, has your heart kept going night and day without asking any help from you?"

"I suppose, grandma, since I was born."

"And that is?"

"Eleven years ago."

"How many weeks is that?"

After a great many blunders, the right number was reached.

"Well, children, you see that is five hundred and seventy-two times longer than a clock can go except it be wound up, and my heart has gone night and day without winding up for more than forty hundred weeks, telling, like the clock, every moment as it passed. I don't know what you think, but I think that is a very wonderful thing, and is it not a wonderful thing that it does not get tired, working night and day without a rest. The clock and watch are reckoned amongst the most ingenious things that man has ever contrived, but the heart, you see, beats it hollow. We know what makes the watch and clock go, but God only knows what makes the heart go. That is another thing God knows and we don't. And I could mention a thousand other things which He knows and we don't. I just now drew a long

breath, and I see you are all breathing ; but why do you breathe ? ”

“ We can’t help it, grandma,” said John.

“ Can’t help it ? What’s the use of it ? ”

“ To make us live,” said Euphy.

“ And how does drawing in air and putting it out make you live ? ”

“ I suppose,” said Richard, “ it sets us a-going, as the wind does the windmill or the ship.”

“ I know,” said Ella, “ it is to cool us, as I cool my soup.”

Poor Ella drew down upon herself another loud laugh, and she was about to cry.

“ You need not cry, Ella, your guess is just about as good as Richard’s. This, then, is another thing that you have to learn, and it is a good thing to know our own ignorance, and I daresay if I ask you why you could not tell me. I see you are thinking why, but can you tell me whether you can stop thinking when you like ? ”

“ I presume so,” said Richard.

"How?"

"I can think about nothing."

"But you are still thinking. Try just now if you can stop thinking. Well, I see you are all thinking how you will manage to stop thinking, but that is still thinking. The truth is, children, you can't stop thinking while you are awake. It may be very silly or very foolish thinking, but still it is thinking. Now, tell me how it is that your mind continues to think whether you will or not, just as the tides in the sea are always running? I'll give you three minutes to answer that question. The time's up, children, and I've got no answer; so this is another thing you don't know. Well, Ella, we have not had your opinion for some time—do your thoughts make a noise in your head like the clock clicking or the watch ticking?"

"No, grandma, except when I speak."

"But speaking, my dear, is not thinking. You speak what you think, but your thinking makes no noise until you speak. It would be very troublesome if our thoughts

made a noise. If they did, this room, since you came in, would have been filled with a confused hum like a country school. Now, children, you have been very attentive. Go out and amuse yourselves in the park for a little, and when you come back, I'll tell you, as I promised, some little story."





## CHAPTER III.

### GRANDMA BEGINS HER STORY.

**W**HILE they were out grandma took a short nap to herself. When they returned, she asked what kind of a story they would like.

"One like the 'Forty Thieves,'" said Richard.

"No, no," said Henry, "let it be one about yourself, grandma."

"Or 'Cinderella,'" said Euphy.

"Well," said the composed, cautious John, "I'll take anyone you like."

"You are not speaking, Ella; what would you like?"

"One like the 'Babes in the Wood,' grandma."

"Yes, yes," they all agreed, "one like the 'Babes in the Wood.'"

"Well, children, I'll give you one, and you may call it 'The Babes of the Sea' if you like. It is a very old story now, for I was first told it when I was quite young. I heard it often after then, and I think I can give it very fully and correctly to you."

## GRANDMA'S STORY.

"There was a gentleman who had a very nice estate on the sea-coast north of Aberdeen, and his wife and he were good people, and they had two children—a boy and a girl. The boy was a year and a-half older than his sister. Their mansion-house stood a mile and a-half apart from any neighbour, and the consequence was that they had comparatively few visitors, but they did not weary, for they were both fond of retirement, and they had plenty to do, and they took great pains in teaching their children. Ronald, the boy, could read the Bible and write a good round hand, and was well up in arithmetic, before he was six years old; and Bethia, his sister, was still an apter pupil than he, and was

not far behind him. The parents were very sensible people, and attended to their bodies as well as their minds. They did not keep them long at a time poring over their lessons, for they knew it was not good for their health, and they knew, also, that one hour of vigorous application was worth half-a-dozen hours of dilly-dallying; so that a great part of the day was their own, and they spent it in play in the fields, or in the garden, or in gathering shells along the sea-shore. And, besides, their father and mother often accompanied them, and told them the names of all the flowers and the seaweeds, and the trees, and the birds; and when their father went a-fishing he took them with him, and they soon became expert fishers, and learned to row, and how to hoist the sail and manage the helm, and there was not a sea-bird but they knew its name and all about it, and could imitate the cries of the most of them. Ronald particularly excelled in piping like the curlew, and Bethia in her imitation of the kittywake. So that you see they were

kept very busy, and very strong, and very happy. Their mother was a beautiful singer and player, and she took great pains in teaching them to sing, and Bethia had such a correct ear and fine voice, that she was sometimes allowed to lead the psalmody at family worship. This was reckoned a great thing by Ronald and herself, and they often talked about it when alone ; and when Ronald was so far advanced as to read the chapter, Bethia was quite out of herself with joy, and it was very beautiful to see how they loved each other, and strove to serve and make each other happy. When either of them caught a slight cold or got hurt in any way, the other took no rest or enjoyment till recovery was complete. Their mamma taught them a simple morning and evening prayer, but she encouraged them, after a while, to say to God what they thought and wanted in their own words. They did not succeed well in this at first, but they were instructed to persevere, and by-and-by they spoke to God in their own way, and after their own desires.

‘If your hearts be right,’ their mother often told them, ‘all is right; for it is the heart God wants, and not words.’ Do you think she was right, children?”

“Yes, grandma, I think so,” said Euphy.

“No doubt she was, for God says, ‘Son, daughter, give me thine heart,’ and nothing else and nothing less will please Him. Words are of no avail unless the heart be in them. And though we should pray, like David, seven times a day, or all day, if we are not in earnest we are only committing sin, for we are playing the hypocrite, or vainly thinking we can cheat God; but is God ever cheated?”

“Never,” said Henry, “for He knows what we feel as well as what we say or do.”

“Yes, Henry, we may deceive ourselves or one another, but God cannot be mocked or deceived. We should take care, therefore, that our hearts are in our prayers when we speak to God. Better not to pray if our thoughts be wandering away upon some other thing.”

"Had Bethia many dolls, grandma?" asked Ella.

The question was very inopportune, but her grandmother said, with a suppressed smile,

"I cannot say, Ella, whether she had or not. I know she had a little pet dog, and one day it brought in a leveret."

"What is that?" asked Euphy.

"A young baby hare—and laid it down at Bethia's feet. It was not much hurt, and she nursed it, and it became very fond of her and she of it; and it grew and grew till it became big, and the strangest thing about it was that it began to catch mice, and there was not a cat about that caught so many."

"Did it eat them, grandma?" inquired Euphy.

"I was not told, but I suppose it did not, for I knew an old woman about thirty years ago who had a hare she had nursed and brought up like Bethia, and it sat at the fireside in her cottage, like a cat, and she told me it was the best catcher of mice

she ever had, and that it killed, but did not eat them ; and that leads me to think that neither did Bethia's. As for Ronald, he had a favourite lapwing—do you know what a lapwing is ? ”

“ A peewit, grandma,” cried several voices.

“ Well, he kept it in the garden, and had a nice little wooden house for it, and it paid a handsome rent—”

“ Rent ! grandma,” exclaimed John.

“ Yes, John, though not in money, but what was as good as money, for it kept the garden clear of caterpillars and slugs. But now you must allow me to go on with my story. Where did I leave off ? ”

“ At the prayers, grandma,” said Richard, “ when Ella asked about the dolls.”

“ O yes, I remember. Well, Ronald and Bethia, you may be sure, loved their parents and each other very dearly, and as the years went past, they were getting more and more knowledge, and growing bigger and stronger, and everything was going on as happily as heart could wish,

when an event occurred which it is painful to relate."

"Don't tell it, grandma," insisted Euphy.

"I must tell it, dear, or I can't go on. Their parents had long promised to visit a distant relative in Orkney, and finding that a nice little vessel was to leave the port nearest to them for that island, they set sail in her. A violent storm arose shortly after leaving the harbour, and the vessel was never more heard of. She had evidently foundered and gone down, and all on board had perished. There was hope for a time that she might have been driven over to the coast of Denmark or Norway, but after a few months all hope was given up. The nurse who was left in charge with the children kept the sad tidings from them as long as she could, but their daily questioning and mourning about the long absence of their dear parents became at last so painful to her, that she began to throw out surmises that surely something had gone wrong with the vessel, and then told them the whole truth. It was pitiful,

they said, to see the poor things how they clung to each other and wept, and how they cried in their dreams on their papa and mamma to come home. Now, there was a half-brother of their father's who was a lawyer and shipowner in Dundee, and he being the nearest relative alive, served himself as sole executor, and took charge of the children and the property, so soon as it was certain that the parents were lost. He visited the children as often as he could, and comforted and prayed with them, and was very kind to them."

"The good man!" cried Euphy. "God would bless him for that."

"No doubt He would," agreed Richard.

"Everything was done that could be done for their good; and Mrs. Muir, an old lady who had been a governess in her youth, was sent to carry on their education. A year went past, and they were again comparatively happy, and their uncle continued to come occasionally; and when he was longer than usual in coming he sent them long affectionate letters, and Ronald some-

times replied to them, thanking him for his great kindness to his sister and himself. They continued their out-door recreations, and frequently went down to the beach to gather shells, and to see the vessels passing and re-passing out at sea. One day they noticed a pretty little boat tacking backwards and forwards, a little way from the land ; and the next day they saw it again, and to their delight it set right in for the place where they stood. A man waved his arm, and cried—

“ ‘Are you Master Ronald, and is the young lady your sister?’ ”

“ ‘I am,’ cried Ronald back, ‘and this is Bethia, my sister.’ ”

“ ‘I am glad of that,’ said the sailor, directing his boat to the wooden platform at hand, which served as a landing-place ; ‘for your uncle is fishing round the headland yonder, and he has sent us for you, and he wishes your boat to go along with us, that he may return with you and spend a few days with you.’ ”

“ This was joyful tidings to them, and

away they sailed in high spirits to meet their dear, kind uncle. The vessel soon passed the headland, but, to their surprise, no fishing-boat was seen.

“ ‘ He must have gone farther south,’ said the sailor who first spoke to them, ‘ but we shall soon make up with him.’ ”

“ They sailed on, and sailed on, but no uncle appeared.

“ ‘ What can have become of him ? ’ ” said Ronald at last.

“ ‘ I suspect,’ said the sailor who had the direction of the little craft, ‘ that he has got notice of one of his vessels from the West Indies having arrived at Aberdeen ; and now, that I remember, he said if he was gone when we returned we should just follow him, and that he would return with you as soon as possible.’ ”

“ ‘ But Mrs. Muir and the servants will be so alarmed,’ said Ronald.

“ ‘ Oh, never mind,’ replied the sailor, ‘ they will be all the happier to see you back ; and, besides, your uncle will know best what is to be done. Leave these mat-

ters to him ; he is a lawyer, and knows about everything.'

" This was not very satisfactory, but what could Ronald or his sister do ? The sailor began to entertain them with long sea-stories, and sang, along with the other three men on board, a number of sea-songs, till, towards the evening, they reached a large vessel lying out in the offing from Aberdeen harbour.

" ' Your uncle will be on board,' said the sailor, ' for this is his ship.'

" They were hoisted up into it, and the captain told them that their uncle had gone on shore to transact some business, but would be back in the morning to take them home. When morning came, however, they were out at sea, with the ship in full sail, and going steadily along. Ronald inquired if his uncle had come on board.

" ' No,' said the captain. ' He sent a message that some urgent business detained him, but that he would drive to your house to-day and explain matters, and that I should take you the trip we are going, and

let you see a little of the world and of sea life, as such a good opportunity might not occur again for a long time. He meant to go with you himself, but business, you know, must be attended to.'

"Ronald and his sister began to feel very uneasy; and their uneasiness was increased when they heard cries of distress coming from the other end of the ship.

" 'What's that, captain?' inquired Ronald.

" 'Oh, it is some of the sailors' children, who are going with us on this pleasure cruise, and I suppose some of them have been misbehaving, or have got sea-sick.'

"As he spoke a boy rushed upon deck and jumped into the sea. A boat was immediately lowered, but ere the boat reached him the boy had gone down for the last time.

" 'That boy,' said the captain, 'was insane, and his mother thought the sail might do him good. I did not think so, but I yielded to her whim. However, he is as well where he is.'

"Ronald and Bethia were now seriously

alarmed, and entreated the captain to let them out at the first port they reached.

“ ‘ I must obey your uncle’s orders,’ said he, ‘ and give you the full benefit of this pleasure cruise. He ordered me also not to allow you to associate with the sailors’ children, so that you will please not to go to the other end of the vessel.’

“ During the day they several times heard piteous cries, which alarmed and distressed them.

“ ‘ What is the meaning of all this, Ronald,’ said Bethia, when they found that they were alone.

“ ‘ I cannot say, Bethia ; but surely it is very strange that uncle should have sent us away without seeing us, or telling us anything about it.’

“ ‘ I fear, Ronald, there is something awfully wrong ; and I don’t like the captain—he looks so cruel, and you heard what he said about the poor insane boy that was drowned.’

“ ‘ Hush, Bethia, someone may hear us. You remember mamma used to tell us

whenever anything came over us, either on sea or land, we should go and tell God about it, and put ourselves into His hands.'

" ' Yes, Ronald, I did so last night and this morning, and I am always thinking of God in my heart.'

" ' So am I, Bethia, and I know He will be with us and help us, and turn all to our good, for He has promised to do so to them that trust in Him ; and papa and mamma told us, you mind, that it is impossible for God to lie—but yonder is the captain coming.'

" ' Well, children,' said he as he came forward, ' I hope you are enjoying yourselves. The wind is in our favour, and we are going at a good eight knots an hour.'

" ' Will it be long, captain,' asked Ronald, ' ere we get to the place you are going to ?'

" ' Not very long, if we get on at this rate.' "

" But, grandma," interrupted Henry, " what did the man mean by keeping them in the dark, and going on as he did ? "

" Well, children, I may as well tell you

now what it all meant, and put an end to your suspense and your conjectures, though I believe it is not what a good story-teller would approve of."

"Oh yes, grandma, tell us—tell us!" they all exclaimed.

"Have patience, then, till I take a little breath, for my breath does not stand out so well as it once did."





## CHAPTER IV.

### KIDNAPPING OF CHILDREN.

“MY old heart, children, begins to beat with indignation,” grandma resumed, “when I think of what led to the treatment these poor orphans underwent. At that time, in Scotland, a number of people made a trade of stealing boys and girls, and selling them to captains of vessels, who took them out to one or other of the West Indian islands, and sold them to the planters there as slaves. They got high prices for them, and were therefore very anxious to kidnap as many as they could.”

“But, grandma,” said Henry, “why were they not taken up and punished?”

“The thing was winked at, Henry, for the profits were great, and many rich people were concerned in it, and they

could afford to bribe and otherwise hoodwink the public."

"But, grandma," remarked Richard, "that did not make it right."

"No, dear; but I am sorry to say that many unjust and cruel things have been done, for the sake of money, by those who professed to be Christians, as well as by those of other religions or no religion at all. Every bad thing which paid well has been lauded and reckoned honourable, where a great and powerful party shared in the spoils, and anyone who ventured to speak against it were either imprisoned or put to death. Extortion and piracy and robbery and slavery and assassination, and all the debasing vices connected with them, have had their advocates and their times of triumph, and they have it still in one or other parts of the world—only, where any of them prevails, it is usually called by another name; that is, children, the evil is called good and the good evil. But you know the name does not alter the nature of the thing, and though men may be deceived

by it, God is not, and the good name which men give to a bad thing is in itself a great sin in the sight of God."

"And do you mean, grandma," said Euphy, "that the captain was taking out Ronald and Bethia to sell them as slaves?"

"Yes, Euphy; and, as it came out afterwards, he was doing it at the instigation of their wicked uncle. Ay, you may well lift up your hands in utter amazement."

"But why did he do that?" asked the self-collected John.

"He did it, John, to get possession of their property."

"Shocking!" cried Euphy.

"So soon as they were missed, and a great noise made about it, he came north with all speed, and seemed half distracted with grief, and instantly sent in different directions to make inquiries respecting them. As their boat was nowhere to be found, it came to be believed that they had gone out with it and perished; and this view was confirmed when, two weeks thereafter, the boat was picked up by a fishing

vessel and brought into Aberdeen harbour. It had suffered considerable damage ; but there was no doubt as to its identity, for a part of the owner's name was still legible. The uncle caused the boat to be brought north, and stowed away in an outhouse. He went into deep mourning, and gave mourning dresses to all the servants. Mrs. Muir was dismissed on the ground of negligence. He visited the tenants on the estate, and made many lamentations over the great calamity which had befallen him, which he said would embitter all the rest of his life. When every needful arrangement was made, he went back to Dundee, and took the necessary steps to serve himself as heir-at-law to the estate. I may as well tell you also, since I am speaking of him, that the whole plot of entrapping the children was devised by him, and carried out by his agents."

"Oh, the bad, bad man!" exclaimed Euphy.

"The vile monster!" cried Henry and Richard.

"I'm going to cry, grandma!" sobbed Ella.

"Well, dear, I do not wonder; many a cry I had over it long, long ago. But since it is paining you all so very much, perhaps I had better stop?"

"No, no, grandma—you must go on!" they all cried; and even Ella said, "Yes, grandma."

"There, again, I forget where I was at! You're right, Euphy, I left off with the uncle; and now we shall go back to the children. As you may suppose, they became convinced that foul play was at work, and that something dreadful was about to happen to them. They often spoke to each other when no one was near; and Ronald tried to comfort his poor sister as much as he could, although he stood as much in need of comfort as she did. The captain saw they were labouring under some apprehension, and he tried to remove it by telling them another lie—for one lie always leads to another. He told them that their parents had unexpectedly been called away

to the island to which he was going, to take possession of a fine estate to which they had fallen heirs.

“ ‘ The letter your father sent you, Master Ronald, would tell you so ? ’

“ ‘ I got no letter, captain.’

“ ‘ Then it must have miscarried ; but no matter now—it’s all right, and they’ll explain it all to you better than I can, when you see them. But I have done wrong, I fear ; your uncle’s instructions were that I should not tell you this, in order that you might have a more delightful surprise when we landed. I hope therefore, my dears, that for my sake you will keep what I have told you as a profound secret.’

“ Young as they were, they both saw that he had told them a set of untruths ; and their fears were increased, and they became more wretched than ever. When they had been a week at sea a violent storm arose, and they were laid up in their berths for two days with sickness. On the third day they were able to go up on deck again, though much enfeebled and sore depressed. They

had scarcely reached it when they felt sure that they heard the sounds of lashes and groans proceeding from the fore part of the vessel.

“‘What can it mean,’ said Bethia, trembling as she spoke and clinging to her brother.

“‘I fear,’ said he, ‘that this is either a pirate’s vessel, such as we have read about in one of papa’s books, or else it is a slave ship, and that the captain has slaves on board; but whatever happens, Bethia, I’ll venture forward and see.’

“Bethia entreated him not to go, but he went. When he reached the gangway of the steerage he was shocked to hear a lash going, and cries of agony, mingled with curses, coming up from below.

“‘Move off, master,’ cried a man from one of the masts, ‘or you’ll be pitched into.’

“He had scarcely spoken when the captain came on deck.

“‘Sir!’ he said, in an angry tone, ‘don’t you know that every one who disobeys my

orders, no matter who he is—though he were King George himself—is liable to be handcuffed, lashed, and put into irons. As this is your first offence, I shall overlook it, but take care in future. Those wretches you heard crying just now are irreclaimable young rogues and thieves who are being sent out to Botany Bay. I shall take them there as soon as I land you where your parents are. We have enough of trouble with them already, but if they saw any one inclined to take their part, they would get ten times more troublesome. I hope, therefore, you will have the good sense not to repeat what you have done, otherwise, to preserve order in the ship, I shall be obliged to put you under confinement.'

"Ronald made no remark, but went back with a heavy heart to his sister. They now felt that some dreadful fate awaited them, but they could do nothing but think and weep and pray. Miserable, you may be sure, children, were the weeks that followed till they came to the end of the voyage. When the vessel reached

Kingston, Jamaica, the captain went on shore and brought a number of gentlemen with him. They went down into the steerage, and after remaining a long time, the captain brought one of them into the cabin where Ronald and Bethia were.

“‘You can write?’ said the gentleman.

“‘A little, sir,’ said Ronald.

“‘And count, the captain tells me?’

“‘Yes, sir.’

“‘And, of course, you can read?’

“‘Pretty well.’

“‘Is your sister as good at these things as you are?’

“‘She is—or very nearly.’

“‘What is your age?’

“‘I am nearly twelve.’

“‘And your sister?’

“‘A year and a half younger.’

“‘You seem to have good muscle—let me feel your arm.’

“Having done so, the captain and he went up on deck, and seemed to be arguing together about something, as if they were striking a bargain. The captain by-and-

by came down, and said the gentleman they had seen, and whose estate lay next to their father's, had kindly offered to come next day and drive them home. He came, and they drove away in the direction of the mountains. Ronald asked the gentleman by the way, although his worst suspicions were now all but confirmed, if his father and mother were 'well. The gentleman smiled, and said he should soon see for himself. After a long drive they reached a handsome mansion with a large balcony stretching all round. Two negroes appeared, and one took charge of the conveyance, and the other was instructed to conduct Ronald and his sister to the overseer's house. The word 'overseer' went like a knife to their hearts. The overseer was a short, thick-set man, with a cold, rigid expression of face. He ordered them to be put into a side-room till he was at liberty to speak with them. When he came in he looked at them for some time, as if he were examining the points of a dog or a horse. Ronald, in order to know the

last and worst of it, broke the painful silence by asking if his father's estate was at hand.

" 'Your father!—who is he?' said the overseer, with a smile.

" Ronald began to explain.

" 'Stop, stop!' interrupted the man, 'I'm sick of that sort of bosh. You've no father now, except your master that bought you, and paid for you, I don't doubt; and if you wish to spend a happy life, you must do your master's bidding, and mine when you come under my charge.'

" He did not wait for an answer, but called on a negress by name, and told her to give them food, and show them where they were to sleep. 'To-morrow,' he added, 'I shall tell you what you've got to do when I shall have consulted with the master.' "

" So they were now slaves," said John.

" Poor, poor Ronald and Bethia!" sobbed Euphy.

" Was there ever such villany!" exclaimed Henry and Richard.

“Yes, children,” said grandma, “to the disgrace of human nature, they were now slaves, and could be taken to market and bought and sold like cattle, and by men who took upon themselves the name of the meek and lowly Jesus, who commanded His followers to do unto others as they would wish others to do to them, and that if they loved Him they must keep His commandments. I am grieved when I think of the wrongs which one human being has inflicted upon another, and how one nation, when it had the power, has tyrannised over or massacred another. Many a time I have wondered why God did not sweep man away from the face of the earth, and I have often felt that if I had the power I would do it ; but it is well that I have not, and that no other has, and that all power is in God’s hands ; for He is long-suffering, and is waiting to be gracious, and is able to make the wrath of man to praise Him, and to bring good out of evil. Not the less, we know, that the history of the human race is red all over.”

"Red! grandma," cried Euphy, in surprise.

"I mean, Euphy, it is written in blood; and I have read that if all the blood that has been cruelly and needlessly shed in wars and otherwise was gathered into one place, it would make a large lake or a little sea. But I am vexed and wearied, children, and I must have a sleep ere I can tell you the rest of my pitiful story. Those of you who would like to hear the rest of it will come here to-morrow night and take tea with me."

They all kissed grandma affectionately, and retired.





## CHAPTER V.

### RONALD AND BETHIA IN SLAVERY.

**E**VERY one of them was seated at the tea-table a good while ere grandma came in, anxiously forecasting how it would fare with Ronald and Bethia.

When tea was over, grandma sat down in her easy chair and said,—

“Now, children, before I begin I wish to ask you a few questions.”

“Very well, grandma,” only one of them said.

“Which of you would like to have white hair like me.”

“Me!” cried Ella.

“None else?”

There was no reply.

“Would any of you prefer wrinkles to white hair?”

There was a dead silence.

"I am old, but shall I ever be young again?"

"No," said several voices.

"Yes!" cried Ella.

All eyes were turned to Ella in amazement.

"When, Ella?"

"When Jesus comes to take you up to heaven, and you'll get wings to fly up, and you'll be as pretty as an angel, and never grow old again."

The rest looked in astonishment at their little cousin, and felt rather ashamed.

"If you were all made slaves like Ronald and Bethia, what would you do?"

"I would run away," said Euphy.

"But where would you run to, Euphy? You could not run home three thousand miles across the sea."

"No, grandma, but I would hide in some place?"

"But they would soon find you out, and if they did not, how would you get food? Would you expect the ravens to come and feed you, as they did Elijah?"

"I don't know, grandma—perhaps they would."

"I don't think they would, and therefore you would soon die of hunger."

"I would write to my father," said Richard, "and he would come and take me home."

"But how would you get your letter to the post-office, Richard? and though you did, it would be opened and sent back to your master, and he would punish you, and make you work harder than ever. Henry, you are not saying what you would do?"

"Well, grandma, I really don't know what I could do."

"I know," said John, "I would get hold of a boat and row myself away."

"Away where, John?"

"Anywhere, and I would rather be drowned than go back."

This was rather a spirited saying for John, and they all laughed, and he laughed too.

"Me, grandma," cried Ella, after a great deal of thought, "would ask God for wings to fly away."

"Well, Ella, although they are laughing at your plan, it has one good thing in it which theirs had not—that is, to go to God with the case, and to ask Him, though not for wings, for He does not give wings to people in this world, and He does not now take them up to Himself in chariots of fire as He did Elijah, but to ask Him to direct you what you should do ; and if you could not get away, to ask Him to give you patience to submit to your fate, and to make it the means of drawing you closer to Himself, and causing you to love Him more and obey Him better. There was a good man who lived long ago, and who was shamefully used, and he said, 'I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.' Who was that, think you?"

"You, grandma," said Ella.

"Job," ventured Richard.

"No, it was Paul," said Henry.

"Yes, Henry. Am I tiring you, children?"

"No, grandma," they all said.

"Well, how big is the moon? Is it as big as a millwheel?"

"No," said Ella, "but it is as big as a cheese."

"It's bigger than a hill," said Euphy.

"What do you think, John?"

"I don't quite know," replied the cautious John.

"Grandma," interposed Henry, "I have read that it is an awful size—as big as a little world."

"How, then, does it look so small to us?"

"Because it is far away."

"Do you think, Ella, if I were taken up to the moon you would see me?"

"Yes, grandma, if it was daylight."

"Did you ever look after a crow, Euphy, that flew past you. Very well, when you looked for a minute or two, did you still see it?"

"No, grandma, it went out of sight."

"How so?"

"Because," said Richard, "it grew less and less the further it flew, till it went out of sight altogether."

"Do you think, then, the moon would go out of sight if it were taken fifty times farther away."

"Yes, grandma, I think so."

"So do I," said Henry, "it would get smaller and smaller till it was as small as a little star, and then it would disappear entirely."

"Do you think it a pity that distance makes things appear smaller?"

"I never thought of that," said Henry.

"Nor I," said Richard.

"Well, I think, children, it is one of the proofs of God's wisdom and goodness that He has arranged it so, for if it were otherwise the sun would fill the whole sky when it was up, and so would the moon, and we would never see the beauty of the stars, and a great many other disadvantages would follow, and it would be equally bad, and perhaps worse, if sounds did not die away in the distance, for there would be such an uproar that we would not be able to hear each other speaking. But I see Ella is going to fall asleep, and so we shall

go back to Jamaica. Let me see now. O yes, I recollect, Ronald and Bethia were taken to the house of the overseer."

"Yes, grandma," said Euphy, "but they had been there for some time, you remember, and they were shown where they were to sleep."

"O yes, you are right. They were put into the same place—a kind of old lumber room—and when they were left alone, they looked into each other's face and wept. He drew her to his bosom and put his arms around her, but it was some time ere he could speak.

"'Thia, dear,' he said at last, 'do you mind the psalm mamma made us learn together the Sabbath before she left us, "God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea." 'Thia, we are in trouble, and we'll tell God about it; for mamma used to say, although He knows it all already, He wants us to tell

Him, not for His information, but for our own good.'

"They knelt down, and between them they told their sad case to God, and asked Him for Christ's sake to take pity on them, and to help them, and to give them patience to bear their lot. When they rose they kissed each other and felt happier. Still, when the overseer came and roughly told them to go to sleep, and when they lay down in their places on the floor, with only an old goatskin beneath them, they had many sad thoughts and dark forebodings, and the night was far spent ere either of them fell asleep. In the morning an old negress served them with basins of maize pottage and molasses, and spoke kindly to them in her own broken English. The forenoon was well advanced when the overseer came and took them over to the great house. They were shown into the master's business-room.

"'I suppose,' said he, 'you now know what you are, and that you are mine for life, unless I choose to sell you. My will,

then, must henceforth be your law in all things, and if you have any stupid pride left, you must put it into your pocket, otherwise it will be worse for you. What did you say your name is, boy ?’

“ ‘ Ronald, sir.’

“ ‘ And yours ?’

“ ‘ Bethia.’

“ ‘ Ah, these names won’t do here ; they are too grand for slaves. Your name, sir, shall henceforth be Bambo. I would make it Sambo, but I have one of that name already ; and yours, girl, will be—let me see !—Crittty. I don’t think there can be any with such a pretty name as that on the plantation. Bambo and Crittty !—will you mind that ? Very well. You said, sir, you can write. Sit down here and let me see what you can do. Very good, very good indeed, for one of your years. Now, add up this list. Very well. How far can you go in arithmetic ?’

“ ‘ I have been as far as decimals, sir.’

“ ‘ Here is a question in proportion for you. Quite right again. Now, girl, what

can you do? Can you dress a lady's hair?'

"'I never tried it, sir; but I can dress my own.'

"'Small merit that, but I suppose you will be willing to learn. Very well, we shall see how you get on. If you both behave well and do your duty, as the Bible enjoins you, and as our good clergyman and man of God will tell you, I shall keep you both in the house; but if you don't, you will be sent into the fields to work with the niggers, from early morn till late at night, and when the sugar-mills are going you will need to work both night and day. Anderson, take charge of this boy and see what sort of a clerk you can make of him; he writes and counts well for his years. Ring that bell!'

"The bell was rung, and a tidy young negress answered it.

"'Take this girl, Dora—Crittty is her name—Crittty, remember! take her to my daughters, and say she is to be waiting-maid to the one that fancies her.'

“Ronald—Bambo now—was set down by Anderson at a side desk, and Critty—poor Bethia!—was taken away and shown into a room, splendidly furnished, where three young ladies sat knitting and chatting. The oldest seemed about nineteen years of age, the next about two years younger, and the youngest somewhere about thirteen.

“‘What is her name, Dora?’ asked the eldest sister.

“‘Crittty, miss.’

“‘What?’

“‘Massa call’m Critty,’ and Dora laughed and screwed her face in disgust.

“‘Who ever heard of such a name? I shan’t have her.’

“‘Nor I—though she were an angel. Critty! Critty! mercy on us!—enough to give one locked jaw.’

“‘I’ll take her,’ said the youngest of the sisters.

“‘And welcome. Critty! Critty! my teeth are sore!’ and they laughed and cast contemptuous looks at the object of their mirth.

“ ‘Come, Critty, to my room,’ said her future mistress, whose name was Isabel, ‘and I’ll show you what I wish you to do.’

“ ‘When they got there the young lady asked—

“ ‘Has Critty been always your name?’

“ ‘No, lady, my real name is Bethia, but your father changed it to Critty.’

“ ‘How stupid of papa! Bethia is such a sweet name; but since he said it, I must call you Critty before people, but Bethia when we are alone. Now, tell me where you come from, and all about yourself.’

“ ‘Bethia did so, and her young mistress was moved to tears.

“ ‘Well, well,’ she said, ‘surely there is something wrong somewhere; but papa says it is all right and can’t be otherwise; and our clergyman says it’s all in the Bible, and that to doubt it is to commit a great sin, for it is running directly in the face of God’s word. I don’t know—surely I must be very wicked—but, Bethia, we shan’t speak of this just now; let me show you my dresses and jewels. This is the dress

I like best. Do you think it pretty? I'm glad you like it ; it was Aunt Sarah's gift on my last birth-day, and Uncle John presented me with the nicest little pony you ever saw. I shall give you a ride on it some day when we go up into the mountains.'

"Bethia was so far cheered by this beginning of her slave life—so different from what she had apprehended. Her young mistress seemed so amiable and kind-hearted ; and she hoped her dear brother would be equally fortunate. The usual dress of her position was given to her, and it became her. She had, however, to bear the taunts and jests of the elder sisters. When she had occasion to go into their presence they would say, 'Here comes Cr-r-r-rity!' and then laugh obstreperously. Dora, too, would jibe her as she passed ; and, strange to say, instead of sympathizing with her, the most of the other female slaves about the house regarded her as a new-comer, and as far beneath them, and did not hesitate to let her know in their broken English what

they thought of her. This at first was very painful to her, but her young mistress always comforted her, and told her not to mind it. Another, and a worse thing was, she was not permitted to see her brother. She spoke of it to her mistress, but was told that her papa had ordered it so, and that she durst not interfere, for if she did he would confine her for a day or two in the dark chamber, and give her nothing but bread and water. 'I once,' she said, 'cried "Shame!" when they were whipping poor old nurse on the bare shoulders, and I was locked up for three days and nights for it, as papa said it was enough to create a rebellion amongst the whole of the negroes.'"

"And how was Ronald getting on, grandma," asked Henry.

"He was getting on very well too. Mr. Anderson, the head clerk, was pleased with him, and in his way was kind enough to him, but never allowed him to forget that he was a slave. And, to save himself, he gave him too much to do, and put most of the difficult work into his hands, and often

made him work till it was very late. In one respect this was good for Ronald, as it allowed him little time, during the day, to think and brood over his sad condition. His greatest trial was that he was not permitted to see his poor, dear sister—and yet they met every night for all that! How did they manage that, think you, children?"

"I know," said Ella; "they crept out on their bare feet after they had all gone to bed."

"Perhaps Ronald got a rope ladder and let Bethia down," suggested Richard.

"Or maybe," said Euphy, "Bethia's mistress let them meet in her room after it was late."

"What say you, John?"

"I don't see through it, grandma," said John.

"Will this help you, children? It was not on earth they met."

"Oh!" cried Henry, "I see it now—it was in heaven."

"But how did they get up?" asked John.

"They got up, John," said grandma, "on

the wings of prayer, and they met in their hearts at the throne of grace."

John apparently was not quite satisfied, but he said nothing.

"Well, children, as I was saying, Ronald was getting on better than he expected. There was one thing, however, which sometimes occurred that distressed him very much. The master occasionally took drink to excess, and, when intoxicated, he would come into the business room, and find fault with this and that, and swear at Ronald and the other slave clerks; and if anyone happened to say anything in self-defence, or by way of explanation, he would burst out into a wild fit of rage, and exclaim with an oath, 'Will you dare, sir, to dispute my word? Here, Bruno, take this ruffian and give him a round dozen.' On one of these occasions, which were gradually becoming more frequent, Ronald ventured to say a word in vindication of the clerk who sat next to him, and the master, in his drunken fury, pulled him from his seat and kicked him, and vowed if he presumed again to contra-

dict him he should get fifty lashes and the black hole for a week. To do justice, however, to the poor infatuated man, whose moral nature had been vitiated by the system under which he had been brought up, he was tolerably kind to his slaves and family when not under the influence of liquor. I need not tell you, children, of all the ups and downs of their slave life, and of which I was told, for it is sickening and can do no good. After five years had gone past, Ronald and Bethia lost all hope of ever getting free. They had hoped long that someone would find out how they had been entrapped and carried off, and that means would be taken to secure their freedom; but hope at last died within them, and they yielded themselves into God's hand, and asked Him to keep them from repining, and to set their affections more and more upon Himself and upon things above. I forgot to say that, on rare occasions, they accidentally caught a glimpse of each other, but that was all. Still, it was a gleam of sunshine in their lot, and was deeply prized

and earnestly coveted. It is pleasant to think, however, that Bethia had fallen in with such a kind mistress. They came sincerely to love each other ; and, best of all, Bethia became the means of leading her to the feet of Jesus. They read together the Bible in secret, and they prayed together ; but before anyone her mistress assumed a distant air, for she knew that, if it was suspected what was going on, Bethia would at once be taken from her and subjected to cruel usage. Matters had gone on thus for five years, when a lamentable misfortune befell Ronald ; but my head is beginning to ache again, and I must defer telling you about it till to-morrow night."





## CHAPTER VI.

### ANDERSON PLOTS RONALD'S RUIN.

**W**HEN tea was past, and grandma had taken her customary seat, she said—  
“ I fear, children, you would not like any questions to-night ? ”

“ Yes, grandma, we would,” the most of them said.

“ Well, will any of you undertake to live without air for an hour ? ”

A general laugh followed the question.

“ Then air must be a very precious thing. If it became scarce, how much would you give for it rather than want it ? ”

“ I would give my mewling cat and barking dog for it,” said the impulsive Ella.

“ I would give everything I have,” said Euphy.

"Certainly," said John, "if you could not get it for less."

"That is, John, you would strike as hard a bargain as you could."

"Well, grandma, wouldn't that be right? There's no use in flinging away things."

"I remember reading somewhere in the Bible," said Henry, "'All that a man hath will he give for his life.' I think it is in one of the psalms."

"No," said Henry, "it is in Job, but I don't mind in what chapter. I'll find it out, grandma, and tell you."

"You will find, Henry, it was Satan who said that, and he spoke the truth for once, and he always does so when it serves his purpose; and wicked men do the same thing. So, you are all agreed that you would not like to want the air; but where does the air come from?"

"The wind brings it," said the venture-some Ella.

"And where does the wind get it, Ella?"

"Don't know, grandma."

"But the wind, my dear, is just the air in motion; and you are Ella, aren't you, when you are running as well as when you are sitting? God has made the air for us, and He could take it away in a moment if He chose; and if He took it away, we would all die. Don't you think, then, we should thank God for giving us air, and not taking it away. Now, tell me, which of you has ever thanked God for the air we are constantly breathing?"

There was no reply given.

"Well, Ella, I'll ask you another question. Did you ever see the air?"

"Yes, grandma."

"What is it like?"

"Like something white."

"But isn't it black at night?"

"Yes, grandma."

"Then it is both black and white; but the truth is, it is neither white nor black, and we don't see it at all, but we feel it when it blows; and if we attend to it, we feel it entering our mouths. Well, that is one thing we believe in, although we never

saw it; and I'll tell you of another thing we believe in, although we never saw it, and that is our souls. But we feel that we have souls, for it is with these we are now thinking; and there is something greater than our souls that we believe in, and yet never saw. What do you think that is?"

"The sea," cried Ella.

"No, Ella, it is God," said Henry. "Isn't it, grandma?"

"Yes, Henry. God, like the air and our souls, is invisible to us; but we know He exists, for if He did not we could not have existed; and if He was to die, we could not live a moment. We don't see Him, and we don't hear Him; but the grass grows, though you don't hear it; and Ella is growing, although she does not hear herself growing; and the earth, Henry, is turning round, though you don't hear it, and though you don't feel it moving. Would you like me now to tell you about the children?"

"Oh yes, grandma—do!" they all cried.

"I think I left off with Bethia getting a ride on her mistress' pony—did I not?"

"No, grandma," said Euphy, "you were to tell us about something very bad that happened to Ronald."

"You are right, Euphy. My memory is always getting worse and worse the longer I live. But that is always the way with old people, you know; and if you live till you are old, you will find that it is so. What may seem strange to you, children, I mind things which happened long ago when I was as young as you are, whilst I forget many things which took place yesterday, or even a few hours ago; and I know a lady older than myself who will ask the same question over and over in the course of ten minutes. Well, what I was going to tell you was this. Ronald was so attentive to his duties, and became so expert in them, that his master came to see his value, and paid him more and more attention; and latterly allowed him sometimes to speak with his sister, in his own presence or in that of his daughters, and occasionally per-

mitted him to go out on horseback for a few hours. This was a delightful change to both, but it did not last very long. Mr. Anderson, the head clerk, who was not a slave, became jealous of Ronald, and, fearing that he should be supplanted by him, he plotted his ruin. He first insinuated to his master that there might be danger in allowing Ronald to ride out alone. The master thought it safer not to let him ride out at all. Anderson's next step was to express his wonder to his master why Bambo made such frequent and minute inquiries about vessels that were to sail from Kingston.

“ ‘Keep a sharp eye on him,’ said the master ; ‘the ungrateful dog is scheming to escape, after all I have done for him and his sister.’ ”

“ By-and-by Anderson showed the master a small piece of paper, which he said he had picked up beneath the window of the room in which Critty slept, and on it was written in pencil the somewhat mysterious letters—  
‘A—l r—y.’ ”

“‘What can it mean, sir?’ inquired Anderson.

“‘What can it mean, sir? Don’t you see it means “All ready” as plainly as if it had been written in full. We shall see who is first ready. They must have got some accomplices. Have you seen anyone lounging about after nightfall of late?’

“‘I can’t exactly say that, sir, but the other night I thought I saw two men dive into the shrubbery as I approached. I might be mistaken, but that was my impression.’

“‘No doubt you were right, sir. It is quite of a piece with the rest. If you see any of the scoundrels again, shoot them, and I’ll stand betwixt you and all danger. You shall have my gun; keep both barrels loaded with buckshot, not ball, as I wish to get out of the rascal shot a full account of all who are concerned in this wicked conspiracy.’

“A few nights thereafter the loud report of a gun was heard after midnight in the neighbourhood of the mansion. The master

was awakened by it, and he knew what it meant. In the morning he called Anderson into his private room, and asked if he had heard the report.

“‘I should think so, sir; the gun was fired by me. According to your orders I have gone out every night, at a late hour, to see that all was right before I went to sleep, and last night I saw a fellow in sailor's dress skulking about; and when I got a favourable chance I fired, and ran forward, thinking I should find the villain lying upon the ground, but he had managed to make off. I felt sure I had hit him, and I went over early this morning to the place and found drops of blood lying about. This is so far satisfactory.’

“‘It is a pity, Anderson, you did not lay him flat.’

“‘At anyrate I think, sir, it will prevent him and others from renewing their infamous attempts for some time to come.’

“‘Not so sure of that. Is Bambo as attentive to his duties as formerly?’

“‘I am sorry to say, sir, he is not. He is always committing mistakes, and seems to be constantly thinking of something else than what he is about.’

“‘This cannot be tolerated longer. He must be pulled up. I shall send him out among the field hands, and instruct Cranston to watch him closely. The base ungrateful wretch!—after treating him like a gentleman so long.’

“Cranston, the overseer, was sent for, and, after receiving his instructions, he entered the business room, where Ronald was writing, and told him to come away over with him to his house, as the master had something for him to do. When he got there, he was ordered to strip.

“‘For what?’ asked Ronald.

“‘No questions, sir—strip!’

“Two strong negroes appeared, and one of them held a cowhide in his hand. He was taken out and bound to a post. He asked for a bullet to put into his mouth, but this was denied him. Twenty stripes were given him, which peeled his back, and the

blood flowed down in copious streams. The usual dressing was given to the wounds, and he was put into a dark room, and a jug of water was set down, the door closed upon him and locked, and he was left alone.

“He could not even guess the reason why he was thus cruelly treated, but he had seen enough of his owner's harsh and capricious temper so as not greatly to wonder at it. He imagined that his master had gone into one of his drinking fits, and hoped so soon as he came out of it that he would get his liberty, and be reinstated at the desk. But, alas, he was wrong; for as soon as his wounds were sufficiently healed, he was ordered to put on the field dress and to go out with the other workers. This was a dreadful change for him. His soft hands were blistered all over, but he was obliged to work on with the rest, under the burning sun, amidst oaths and the crack of the overseer's whip. Here was misery indeed, and he was now made to experience what slavery is in one of its worst forms.

Cranston seemed to take delight in heaping upon him the most insulting epithets, and in urging him to increased effort by the crack of his formidable whip. When night came he was put under the charge of a powerful negro, who acted as a kind of superintendent, and who assigned him a corner in his hut to lie down in which was hardly fit for a dog. When he lay down he tried to think, and to commit himself and his case to God ; but the pain of body he was in unfitted him for thought, and deterred him from sleeping. As morning drew on he fell into a kind of doze, when the horn sounded which summoned the slaves to labour. Sick and sore, he went out to pass another day. His stiffened sinews and blistered hands made him groan with pain, which Cranston answered with the crack of his whip, and a threat if he repeated it he should have half-a-dozen on the spot. During the intense heat of the noonday sun he fainted, and the unfeeling driver took out a flask of strong rum and poured a quantity of it on his inflamed and

blistered face. The sharp pain which the liquor caused restored him to consciousness.

“‘I thought I would bring you to your senses, my good fellow,’ said Cranston, with a fiendish chuckle. ‘Get up, sir, and mind your work, and no more of your groans and sham faints; these things will not pass current here. You are no longer at your mother’s apron strings, remember, Bambo!’

“The subordinate laughed loud at this sally of his superior, and called on the hands to strike up one of their merry chants. Another wretched day went past, and another equally wretched night followed. Happily the next day was Sunday, and its comparative rest was indeed a luxury.

“Amidst his bodily pains, Ronald was tormented with the thought that Bethia would necessarily come to know of his lamentable condition, and he knew that her sufferings would be even greater than his own. Need we wonder, then, that he was sometimes

tempted to doubt the justice and goodness of God ; and at other times to question whether He was everywhere present, as the Bible represented Him to be ; and if He was, why did He not check the rampant evil that was going on, since He had ample power to do so. And then, again, he would conclude that he had grievously offended his Maker, and that God had utterly forsaken him. Don't be surprised at this, children ; for even the best men, when sorely tried, have had thoughts like these. They were grieved afterwards that they allowed themselves to think so, but they did think so. These distressing thoughts were strengthened in Ronald's mind when that Sabbath afternoon he was commanded with the rest to come out and see old Lizzy, the slave cook, punished for having overdone a pudding which Cranston had ordered for dinner.

"The poor old woman besought the tyrant to have mercy on her for Christ's sake, but what cared he for Christ or for her cries. His heart was of stone, and his

conscience callous as india-rubber. And to add to the shocking experience through which Ronald was passing, a curate came in the evening to preach to the slaves on the estate. He extolled their master as a benevolent and Christian man, who contributed largely to charitable and religious objects, and that they had great reason to thank God that their lines had fallen in such pleasant places, and that, as a consequence, it was at once their duty and their privilege implicitly to obey his orders in all things, as he stood to them in the place of God ; for this was well-pleasing in the sight of God, and that, if they did so, God would richly reward them in the world to come.

“ Ronald was greatly amazed and confounded at this glaring perversion of divine truth, but what could he do but listen in silent indignation, for he knew, if he did not, it would only bring instant and severe punishment upon himself, and probably make the condition of his fellow-slaves worse.

"Monday came, and he had to pass through the same frightful ordeal as before. In the course of a week, however, his hands began to heal, and the muscles of his body to get used so far to the strain that was put upon them, but the lessening of the bodily pain increased the power of thinking, and thereby aggravated the anguish of his mind. His thoughts ran constantly on Bethia, and on the misery he knew she would be enduring, and the fear that she might be tempted to appeal to the master on his behalf, and be sent out, like himself, to work in the fields. This fear haunted him night and day, and in the course of little more than a fortnight his mental anxiety and his bodily exhaustion brought on a violent fever, and he was put away into a little outhouse, which was dignified with the name of 'hospital.' He was soon in a delirious state, and the doctor thought it extremely improbable that he should recover."

"Poor, poor Ronald!" Euphy cried, and wept.

"Poor, poor Ronald!" was the exclamation of the others.

"Yes, poor indeed, children; and yet it was perhaps well that his reason was eclipsed, for he often fancied that he was away out on the sea with his father and Bethia, or gathering shells with her along the shore, and imitating the cries of the sea-fowl as they passed before his frenzied imagination.

"We must not, however, forget Bethia, children. She missed meeting her brother as before, and she became anxious, and supplicated her dear mistress to find out the reason. The garrulous Dora acquainted her with what had taken place, but she could not muster courage to tell Bethia until Bethia fell upon her neck in a passion of tears, and besought her for mercy's sake to let her know the worst, whatever it was, for it could not be worse than she dreaded. It was, however, worse, and she swooned away.

"'O Miss Isabel,' she cried, as soon as she recovered consciousness, 'can there

nothing be done for my poor, poor brother Ronald ?'

" ' I fear not, Bethia, for papa is in one of his drinking bouts again, and I know were I to appeal to him he would spurn me from him, and cause me to be shut up in the dark room for presuming to interfere with his arrangements. The only thing I can do is what I have already done. I have left cordials and everything I could think of with old Lizzy, the cook, who loves me, and she is to give him them secretly, and she has promised to do everything in her power for him ; and I know she will do it, for she is a kind-hearted creature in her way, and will do anything to serve me. And now, dear Bethia, let us pray God to have mercy on poor Ronald, and spare his life. You tell me he is good, like yourself, and God will not leave him alone, but inwardly comfort and strengthen him in his extremity.'

" When they rose from their knees Bethia embraced her mistress, and invoked the blessing of God upon her head. But,

children, my old eyes are filling with tears as well as yours, and my heart is beginning to ache, so that I had better stop ; for, unless I do so, I know that I shall pass a sleepless night. Kiss me, then, and say good night."





## CHAPTER VII.

### CONCLUSION.

**N**EXT evening, when tea was over, grandma said,

“I shall ask you no questions to-night, for I know you will be wishful to hear how it fared with poor Ronald and his sister, but before doing so I must first take you back to Scotland and let you know what was going on there.”

“O no, grandma, don’t! don’t!” cried Euphy.

“Don’t!” cried Ella, and John chimed in with them.

“But I must, dears, and you shall see my reason for it in a little; but I won’t detain you long in Scotland.”

“But Ronald may be dead ere we get back,” said Euphy.

"Yes, grandma," cried Ella.

"I don't quite see that," said John.

"Let grandma alone," interposed Henry, "she knows best how to do."

This point being settled, grandma went on to say—

"You remember, children, what I told you about their wicked and deceitful uncle. Very well, after he felt sure he had got fairly rid of them, and had served himself heir to the estate, the love of money, which was his besetting sin, took firmer hold of him, so that, what from the profits of his profession, and his ships, and the estate, and his penurious mode of living, he rapidly increased in wealth. It was noticed, however, that his happiness did not seem to keep pace with his riches. He became moody and unsociable, and when he did enter into company, he either remained silent and abstracted, or burst out into wild fits of merriment. It came at last to be thought that his mind was giving way. Sometimes he would seem to rally, and for a week or so conduct his affairs with vigour

and ability, and then he would relapse into gloomy silence and strange absence of mind. He began to speak aloud to himself as he passed along the streets, and when anyone accosted him, he would start, and return the most incoherent answers to the question or remarks addressed to him. Ah! little did he think how true it was what he said after the disappearance of his nephew and niece, 'That their loss would embitter all the rest of his life.' Whilst poor Ronald was writhing under a burning sun in the fields, and his poor sister weeping and praying for him in the house, their miserable uncle was burning under the fires of an awakened conscience, and nothing, children, in this world is so dreadful as that. But his career was near a close. He went from food, and was tormented with an insatiable thirst, and at last he took to bed and sent for a brother lawyer, and made a full confession of all he had done, and caused him to write down what he said, and to correspond with the captain who took out the children to Jamaica,

and get the address of the planter to whom he had sold them. The required information was got, and a legal document was drawn out, and duly signed and attested, bequeathing all his money and effects to his nephew and niece. The lawyer also was instructed to go out immediately to Jamaica along with a merchant whom the uncle had once obliged in business, and to set free the children at any cost and bring them home with them. The arrangements being made, the unhappy man felt somewhat easier, and began to revive a little; but the consuming fires had fed too long on his constitution to permit of recovery. It was on a king's birthnight, I was told, when the whole town was astir, and bands were playing, and drums were beating, and the bells ringing, and fireworks going off, and the people shouting, that the spirit of the wretched man took flight.

“In due time the messengers arrived at Kingston. The lawyer made all necessary inquiries, and he and his friend, dressed in the light apparel of the country, set out on

their errand. When they arrived at the planter's house, and were ushered in, the planter appeared himself, and after fencing about for some time, the lawyer asked him if he was in need of any good hands.

"'No,' he said, 'I have too many already.'

"'Perhaps, then, you will be willing to part with one or two.'

"'Well,' said he, 'I might if I got a good offer. What sort of hands do you want?'

"'We are not very particular,' replied the lawyer, 'but we should like a young lad or two, and a girl amongst them, if you have any such articles to spare.'

"'I have a lad of some sixteen or seventeen years of age that I should not care to part with if a fair price were offered.'

"'What price do you put upon him?' asked the lawyer.

"'I have him among the field hands just now for a misdemeanour, but he is a capital writer and bookkeeper, and has the head of a legislator on his shoulders, and is worth three hundred dollars to any man that needs him.'

“ ‘What is his name, sir?’ inquired the lawyer.

“ ‘When he came into my hands he called himself Donald or Ronald, or something like that, but, of course, I changed it, and christened him Bambo.’

“ ‘It is a large price you ask for him, but if he is all you say, and I am pleased with his looks, we may possibly agree. Have you no girl to match?’

“ ‘Well, I have one,’ said the planter, ‘but she is so useful to one of my daughters that I should scarcely like to part with her; but if I think of it, how much would you be inclined to give.’

“ ‘Say the same sum as for the boy,’ answered the lawyer.

“ ‘Make it three fifty—she is very pretty, remember, and just turned of fifteen.’

“ ‘Is she connected with the lad?’ asked the lawyer.

“ ‘Yes; they are brother and sister, I believe. I may mention that he is not at present in full vigour, as he had a fever lately that has pulled him down a little, but

in a week or two he will be as strong as ever he was.'

" 'Well, as you can conscientiously recommend them, and as they seem to lie in our way,' remarked the lawyer, 'say six hundred dollars for both.'

" 'Not a dollar less than six fifty,' responded the planter with some warmth; 'and in truth, if I did not need the money at present, you should not have them at all.'

" 'What say you?' inquired the lawyer, turning to his friend the merchant.

" 'I suppose we must just agree, though I think the price somewhat exorbitant.'

" 'Then,' said the lawyer to the planter, 'here is a bill of sale which I have with me. Please, sign it; and here are two cheques on the Kingston bank for the amount.'

" Before signing, the planter took up and looked narrowly at the cheques, and then filled up and appended his name to the bill of sale.

" 'When shall you send for your property?' he inquired.

“ ‘We shall take them with us,’ replied the lawyer, ‘as they are much needed on the estate we want them for.’

“ ‘All right,’ said the planter, ringing a bell as he spoke.

“ Mr. Anderson came in.

“ ‘Go to the south field, Anderson, and bring Bambo here. Now, gentlemen, what shall you have—coffee or wine?’

“ ‘Coffee, please,’ they both said.

“ In a few minutes Bambo was ushered in. The lawyer looked narrowly at his purchase, and remarked—

“ ‘I fear, sir, we have paid too high a price for this article.’

“ ‘Not a bit of it,’ asserted the planter. ‘Take my word for it, you’ll find him well worth the money. Anderson, call Dora, and bid her say to my daughter Isabel that I want to speak to Critty immediately.’

“ Critty came in trembling all over, and her eyes red with weeping. She gave a cry when she saw Ronald in such pitiful plight, and he made a rush towards her, but was intercepted by the planter, who

cried out in a voice of thunder, 'Back, you brute!'

" 'I fear,' said the lawyer to his friend, 'we have made a mistake.'

" 'Mistake or no mistake,' vociferated the planter, 'the bargain is concluded, and shall stand. Bundle them off, if you please.'

" 'Come along then, Bambo! That's your name, I think,' said the merchant; 'a villainous one, and must be changed. Bring the girl out, and shove her up beside the driver.'

" Her young mistress, who loved her so much, had seen the vehicle arrive, and two gentlemen step out of it; and when Bethia was sent for she apprehended the worst, and was on the outlook in front of the house, and, when Bethia was brought out, she rushed forward with a wild shriek and clasped Bethia in her arms, and sobbed and wept, and swooned and was conveyed into the house. Her unfeeling sisters stood on the balcony above, enjoying the scene, and laughing as they trilled Cr-r-r-ritty's name, and wished her a happy journey. The

vehicle drove off with two hearts in it bounding with joy, and two breaking with sorrow, for they dreaded they might be sold to different masters, and worse treated than they had yet been. When they had gone on a few miles, the driver was ordered to stop. Shall I stop too, children, for the night?" asked grandma.

"No—no—no!" they all shouted out, and flew at her and pulled her about in her chair, so that she was glad to go on, and paid dear for her little bit of waggery.

"Well," said she, after taking breath for a little, "the lawyer came out and asked Critty to come down, and she did so, and he handed her into the central part of the open conveyance; and the merchant did the same for Bambo, and then they stepped in themselves, and sat down opposite the wondering and perplexed pair.

"'I may tell you for your comfort,' said the lawyer, after they were fairly seated, 'that you are now in better hands. You shall have no more field work, Bambo; and as for you, Critty, you shall henceforth

be Miss Bethia, and your brother Mr. Ronald.'

"They both looked in utter amazement at the speaker, and thought he was fooling them.

" 'No,' said he, 'I am not jesting. We are from Scotland, and came out expressly to redeem you and take you home. Your uncle is dead, and before he died he confessed what he had done, and ordered that you should be sent for and set free at any cost, and, as if to make some atonement for his cruelty towards you, he has served you heirs, share and share alike, to all his money and property, which is very large, and, of course, the estate reverts to'—

"At this point he was stopped in his account, for Bethia had fainted away. The merchant took out a flask and poured some wine upon her head and face, while Ronald held her to his bosom. When she revived, Ronald rose and said—

" 'Gentlemen, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. God has heard our prayer at last!' and kneeling down with

Bethia at his side, he thanked God aloud in such words and with such fervour, that the black driver turned round and looked with open mouth and eyes at the strange spectacle, and the gentlemen were so impressed and overcome, that they sobbed aloud. I need not tell you, children, about the voyage home, and how Ronald re-entered upon the possession of his estate, and how happy and thankful he and his sister were, and how good they were to all the poor in the neighbourhood, and how they visited and sympathised with those in distress or under bereavement ; but I may tell you that Ronald became one of the chief means of putting down the nefarious system of kidnapping from which he and Bethia had suffered so much ; and, what will surprise you more, after corresponding with a lady in Jamaica for nearly two years, he went out and brought her home as his wife ; and who do you think she was ?”

“ Isabel !” they all cried.

“ Yes, Isabel ; and she was a true Christian, like himself and Bethia ; and Bethia

had been, under God, her spiritual mother ; and by-and-by Bethia got married too, to a man after her own heart in the neighbourhood, and two better or happier families were not to be found anywhere. Now, children, I have finished my story, and shall bid you good night."

"Good, good night, grandma!" they all cried, and kissed her with tears of joy in their eyes.



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A RACE OF OLD;

OR,

THE UNIVERSAL OLYMPIC.



*A Fragment.*

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# A RACE OF OLD;

OR,

## THE UNIVERSAL OLYMPIC.

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### A Fragment.

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**I**T once befell  
In times of old,  
As legends tell,  
By minstrels told,  
That earth one day  
Convened to try  
What longest should  
And fastest fly,  
And what should move most tardily.

The tribes of earth  
meet to witness the  
comparative speed.  
of the various crea-  
tures and elements.

And every caste and clime were there, The spectators.  
From utmost west to farthest east,  
In robe of silk, or cloth of hair,  
Or fur, or skin of beast,  
Or sew'd palm-leaves, or vesture quaint,  
Or sleek with oil, or daub'd with paint;

And some tattooed and plumed were seen,  
Or gay in gaudy mocassine;  
And gem and trinket, club and spear,  
And glittering brand,  
And bow, and axe, commixèd were,  
Magnificently grand.

And high o'er land,  
From other spheres,  
Competitors,  
With their compeers,  
To act as fitting arbiters,  
Appear a shining band.

Competitors from  
other worlds, ac-  
companied by suit-  
able judges.

## CANTICLE I.

UPON a plain,  
Which swept away  
Beneath the chain  
Of Himalay,  
The racers stood;—  
A motley brood  
As ever yet  
On earth have met,  
Or e'er shall meet again.

The race course  
and the racers.

With pond'rous mail  
And slimy track,  
First came the snail,  
With shell on back;  
And next to him  
Stood spider grim,  
With perilous waist  
And long lean limb;  
H

The snail.

The spider.

And up on branch                      The sloth.  
The sloth hung prone—

.            .            .            .  
.            .            .            .

The sleuth-hound then,              The sleuth-hound.  
With sullen look  
And snout on ground,  
His station took,  
Emitting oft a fearful sound,  
Like cayman's bark, or lion's mumble,  
Or distant earthquake's hollow rumble.

Beside him ranged,                      The ostrich.  
With sombre air,  
Like Mussulman  
At evening prayer,  
On legs full slim,  
And tall and grim,  
The ostrich rose, like scaffolding.

Then next appear'd                      The savage.  
A savage red,  
With shaggy beard  
And matted head ;  
Encased in brawn  
From neck to heel,

That oped and shut  
 Like leaves of steel ;  
 Whose eyes now came  
 And went, like flame,  
 Unsettled in his head.

The fairest thing                      The antelope.  
 Of wild or wood,  
 The antelope,  
 Beside him stood,  
 And the wild mule of Tartary.      The wild mule.  
 And snorting nigh,                      The race-horse.  
 With bloodshot eye,  
 The race-horse paw'd  
 The ground, and gnaw'd  
 His chaps, and toss'd  
 The foam away,  
 As breakers fling their spray  
 Upon a stormy coast.

. . . . .  
 . . . . .

With wings outspread,                      Flying things.  
 Like mainsails sprung,  
 Right overhead  
 The condor hung ;

While by his side,  
 In speckled pride,  
 The swallow lay—  
 A cock-boat gay,  
 Beside that ship of air.

And next was heard  
 The wild-duck's wing,  
 Above the rest  
 Sharp whistling ;  
 And intermittently  
 The eagle's scream  
 And falcon's cry ;  
 And on the mane  
 Of hurricane,  
 A cloud, begat  
 Of whirlwinds, sat,  
 In buoyant act to bound away.

. . . .  
 . . . .

And then there came  
 (A dazzling sight !)  
 A car of flame  
 And steeds of light,

Celestial things.

Sun chariot.

Sent from the sun  
That race to run.—  
The crowd admire  
The harness'd fire,  
And boast 'twill win the crown.

. . . .  
. . . .

Then last of all, Angel.  
On cloud of snow,  
An angel stood,  
And look'd below.  
A lovely light,  
Divinely bright,  
In streamers fed  
Around his head,  
And changed its hue,  
As diamonds do  
Beneath the setting sun.

And still he look'd  
And look'd again,  
Nor up the sky,  
Nor o'er the plain;  
Nor gave he heed  
To bird or steed,

Or cloud or car,  
 Or jeer or jar  
 Of congregated men.

But fix'd he gazed  
 (As one that looks  
 On pictured skies  
 In summer brooks)  
 At peak retired,  
 Where sat, inspired,  
 An aged man,  
 Whose features wan  
 Burn'd like a coal,  
 While through his soul  
 The fires of revelation ran.

An old man sits  
 apart in a pro-  
 phetic trance.

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## CANTICLE II.

. . . .  
 . . . .  
 . . . .  
**B**UT, hark! the trump      The trumpet is  
sounded, and the  
course is cleared.  
     The "warning" sounds!  
 The way is clear'd;  
     Each bosom bounds.  
 The countless throng,  
 The line along,  
 Moves to and fro,  
 As if, below,  
 A rolling earthquake pass'd.  
  
 Another blast,      It blows again and  
the race begins.  
     And off they bound!  
 But ere yon hoofs  
     Have reach'd the ground,  
 Ere twice the duck  
 His wings has struck,  
 Or snail has gone  
     A hair's-breadth on,

Right round the world  
 Yon car has hurl'd,  
 And thrice 'tis round again.

So swift its flight,  
 Nought meets the eye  
 But one red ring  
 Round earth and sky,  
 Like meteor vast  
 From Ætna cast,  
 Or that huge zone  
 Round Saturn thrown,  
 Which sages see afar.

. . . .  
 . . . .

But see that ring  
 In shreds is riven,  
 For halts the car  
 In middle heaven,  
 And, lo, upon  
 His cloudy throne  
 The angel lights again ;  
 And up ascends  
 A shout that rends  
 The solid sky in twain.

The car stops,  
 and the angel re-  
 alights.

Now duly weigh  
Whose is the prize,  
Ye umpires brought  
From other skies,  
While, o'er the plain  
And through the air,  
The things of earth  
The strife maintain.

The celestial arbiters deliberate between the chariot of fire and the angel.

. . . .  
. . . .

## CANTICLE III.

IMMEASURABLY behind    The race goes on  
between the things  
of earth and air.

    Past jeering throng

    The stilted spider

        Jerks along,

And, slow as growth

    Of tree, the sloth.—

        :       :       :       :  
        :       :       :       :

Above! the cloud,

    On tempest's wing,

Before them all

    Shoots thundering.—

        :       :       :       :  
        :       :       :       :

The storm cloud  
takes the lead  
among the things  
that fly.

Below! the steed,

    With frantic speed,

At one wild bound

    Usurps the lead.

But ere he gains  
The distant plains  
He dashes to the ground,  
A corpse of living fire.

The ostrich, next,  
And antelope,  
With desert strength,  
Triumphant cope ;  
While, far behind,  
But cool as wind,  
The burly head  
And bounding tread  
Of noble savage comes.

Yet, long before  
They reach the bay  
Whose billows roar  
Far, far away,  
He tires them down,  
And wins the crown  
Of earth, but not of sky.

The savage wins  
below.

. . . .  
. . . .

And loud huzzas  
Are coming near,  
And men grow white  
As if in fear ;  
And each makes pause  
The news to hear,  
And as he hears  
He shouts on high,  
And "Savage ! Savage !"   
Is the cry—  
And on the rapid tidings fly.

## CANTICLE IV.

. . . . .  
 . . . . .

**B**UT, hush! they come,  
 Yon umpire band,  
 And in mid-sky  
 Take up their stand.

The celestial  
 judges come for-  
 ward to proclaim  
 the issue between  
 the sun-car and  
 the angel.

A silence deep  
 As ocean's sleep  
 Pervades the throng,  
 While up are bent  
 A firmament  
 Of eyes intent,  
 The list'ning line along.

And one comes forth  
 From out that band,  
 With parted lips  
 And lifted hand,

And speaks them fair,  
In few fit words  
That shake the air,  
And earth profound,  
And solid rock  
With deep majestic mellow sound,  
As if a cavern spoke.

Then to the sun  
He cries aloud,  
"The angel's won!"  
("The angel's won!"  
Respond the crowd.)  
"While round the world  
The chariot hurl'd  
A thousand times,  
The angel flew  
Till rose in view  
The utmost star  
That burns afar  
Upon creation's verge.  
By many times  
He's gain'd the prize!"  
"By many times!"  
The assemblage cries.

The angel victo-  
rious.

"By many times!"  
The hollow'd earth replies.

"Not mine the prize,"  
The angel cries;  
"But his, who, borne  
On wings divine,  
Hath swept the skies,  
And circled round  
The mighty bound  
That girds sublime  
The course of time,  
And heaven high,  
And hell profound,  
Since blew the trumpet-horn,

The angel assigns  
the victory to the  
old prophet that  
sat apart upon the  
rock.

"His is the prize!  
Yon aged man  
Who sits apart  
With upturn'd eyes  
And beating heart,  
Conceiving he beholdeth still  
The wonders he hath seen,  
Of what shall be and what hath been—  
Of glorious and of terrible,

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THE LITTLE FISH

THE LITTLE FISH, IN THE MIDDLE OF THE

WATER, WAS THE ONLY ONE OF ITS KIND—

THE LITTLE FISH, IN THE

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In heaven above, in earth between,  
And in the depths of hell—  
His is the prize !”

“ His is the prize !”  
The mighty concourse cries ;  
“ His is the prize !”  
The vaulted heaven replies.



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